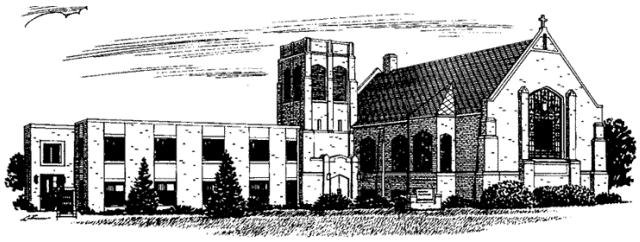


SARON NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook: www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

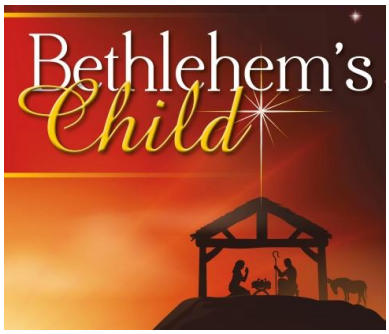
December 2016

Advent Mid-Week
Soup Supper at 6:00 pm
Worship at 6:45 pm
Activities at 7:15 (approx)
December 7 – Bearing Fruit
Christmas Decorating
December 14 – Healing of the Whole World
Christmas Carol Sing
December 21 – God in Unexpected Places

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
Come to Bethlehem and See
Sunday, December 11; 11:00 am
(Regular Worship at 8:30 am)

CHOIR CANTATA
Bethlehem's Child
December 18, 11:00 AM Worship
(Regular Worship at 8:30 am)

A word from the Composers – Victor C. Johnson and Lloyd Larson: Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, foretold that the Messiah would come and He would be called "Emmanuel-God with us." The gospel writer John, having had a personal association with Jesus and looking in retrospect at the miracle of God becoming human, said it this way: The word (meaning Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. We have beheld his glory, the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father. This is the compelling story of Christmas. This is the miraculous story of Bethlehem's Child.



Join us as we prepare for and celebrate the birth of the Christ child. (See Christmas schedule on cover.)

Pastor Joan

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Senior Choir Director,
Bell Choir Director
Email: mroll@saronlutheran.org
Irma Gorman, Organist
Margaret Froehlich, Administrative Assistant
Denise Cook, Financial Secretary
Danielle Hohman, Child Care

Sundays at Saron:
During the School Year:
8:30 & 11:00 A.M. Worship
Childcare provided
9:40 Learning for Ages 2 – Adult

*Summers (**Beginning Memorial Day weekend**):*
9:30 Holy Communion
Childcare provided
No Learning Hour

All are welcome!
We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Rev. Whayne Hougland, Bishop of the Episcopal
Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

Saron's Mission:
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!

Caring and Sharing

In Our Prayers –

We remember in our thoughts and prayers: **Arla Huelsberg** is at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center, St. Joseph; **Ev Maki and Marilyn Klann** is at Caretel; **Lila Roethel** is at the Willows; **Dorris Doutt** is at Woodland Terrace, Bridgman.

Serving in the military:

Andy Wedde – **California**

Office Hours at Saron

Margaret (secretary): Mon-Tues, 9 AM - 1 PM
Weds of Newsletter Week, 9 AM - 1 PM
Volunteers: Weds, 9:30 AM - 11 AM+
Denise (financial secretary): times vary
Call for other times/changes
Pastor: most mornings, except Fridays
When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (983.1273) or contacting the president of the congregation.
Note: E-mails meant for Pastor should be addressed to *oleson@saronlutheran.org*. E-mails to Margaret and the church office should be addressed to *info@saronlutheran.org*.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members in December 2016.

Dec. 2 - Marilyn Klann
Victor Coar
Jason Crockett
Dec. 4 - Phil Standen
Dec. 5 - Alexander Breyen
Dec. 6 - Rachael Nadeau
Dec. 7 - Dana Riley
Lorraine Mikesell
Adam Maly
Dec. 11 - Robert Deaton
Dec. 12 - Cynthia Brown
Edward Brunner
Gloria Hopkins
Dec. 13 - Eric Standen
Deborah Standen
Dec. 14 - Donna Rohweder
Dorothy Bennett
Dec. 16 – Charles Pater
Dec. 18 - Heather Pudell
Dec. 27 - Oliver Fortenbacher
Dec. 30 - Gretchen Oleson
Madison Dipert
Dec. 31 - Kristen Harper

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members in December 2016.

Dec. 18 – Dennis and Colleen Lundgren
Dec. 26 – Brian and Marybeth Culverhouse
Dec. 30 - Mark and Judy Wedde

***"God's Blessings for a very happy day and* year round"**

If there is anyone who has been omitted, or, if the dates are incorrect from the birthday and anniversary list, please call the church office at 983-1273. Thank you.

SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the family of Laurie Granger upon her death November 13. Her memorial service will be held at Saron on Friday, December 9, at 6 pm. Visitation will be at Saron from 4-6 pm. Our prayers go out to Laurie's daughters, Kristen (Mike) Harper and Heather (Steve) Pudell and their families.

Also, we extend our sympathy to the family of Mike (Kristen) Harper upon the death of his mother in Missouri on November 14.

God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 46:1a

Pastor Oleson's Sabbatical

by Pastor Oleson

A couple of the many questions asked about my upcoming sabbatical revolve around planning, "What is the committee doing? What preparations are being made?" These are important questions. The sabbatical planning team (Kerrie Hoodlebrink, Mary Alice Brunner, and Pastor) has been hard at work with preparations.

The committee itself has met monthly so that preparations are in place, including consulting the guidelines for a sabbatical as provided by the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. In addition, I have been meeting with all committees and/or chairs and liaisons, as well as staff persons, to make sure anticipated needs are met. Mary Alice and I have met with Pastor David Slater who will serve as anchor supply pastor while I am gone, filling in for approximately half the Sundays. A schedule has been made and other pastors will be contacted after the holidays for their availability to fill in on the remaining Sundays. Yes, there are a lot of details! We are trying to anticipate the "what ifs" knowing that we will cover most, but not

all. There will also be the folks who will be responsible for any of those decisions, should they arise. Notes are being made and a binder will be in place that will hold info regarding all the details.

"But, what will you be doing, Pastor?" That question will be answered in another article! Stay tuned.

The sabbatical is planned for April 24-July 23. If you have any additional questions, please contact Mary Alice Brunner at edmaryaliceb@ameritech.net; Kerrie Hoodlebrink at kehoodle@gmail.com, or Pastor Oleson at oleson@saronlutheran.org.

TIME TO RENEW "LIVING LUTHERAN" MAGAZINE

"*Living Lutheran,"* the magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, keeps us informed of events and issues impacting Lutherans. Subscribers also have access online to more than 9,000 archived articles and 400 Study guides.

Those that have been enjoying *"Living Lutheran"* this past year or those who would like to begin receiving *"Living Lutheran"* will be able to purchase or renew for the price of $9.00 a year. Please make out a check to Saron and write "Living Lutheran" in the memo area of your check or place cash in an envelope clearly identified with your name, the amount enclosed and the words *"Living Lutheran."* This can be handed in to the office or placed in the offering plate. We want to get all of the subscriptions in as soon as possible so that there will be no lapse in current subscriptions.

Worship

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

Sunday Dec. 4 –
2 Sunday in Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday Dec. 11 –
3 Sunday in Advent
Isaiah 35:1-10
Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday Dec. 18–
4 Sunday in Advent
Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Saturday Dec. 24 –
Christmas Eve
Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

Sunday Dec. 25 –
Christmas Day
Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)
John 1:1-14

Nursery Help Needed

We are welcoming more help for the nursery. We need a volunteer for each service so that there are 2 persons in the nursery at all times. If you can help, please sign up at church or let Marilyn Lucy or Krin Jurgensen know of your willingness.

PRAYER GROUP

Join us on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship. We meet in the sanctuary.

POINSETTIAS PLANTS

You are invited to purchase a poinsettia that will help beautify Saron's chancel at Christmas. You may pick up your plant(s) after the Christmas Eve service December 24th**. ORDER DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 19Th**. Call the church office for more details or pick up an order form in the Sunday bulletin.

Learning

book of faith
Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

Ephesus Bible Study Group
Contact Mary or Bob Kynast for the latest details.

Men's Monthly Devotion - New Location
Beginning Saturday, December 3, Saron Men's Monthly Devotion and Breakfast will meet at the Galley Grill on Red Arrow Highway in Stevensville at 9:00 am. We will not meet at the church. This should make better use of time and will allow an earlier finish. The Galley Grill is on the Super 8 Motel property at 4296 Red Arrow Highway just north of the Tyler Honda car dealership.

Saron Men's Tuesday Evening Bible Study
Saron's Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study meets at 6:00 pm at the church. At 7:00 pm we adjourn for a time of fellowship. All men are invited to join us. As the Bible says "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). We are not going to meet during Advent but rather will encourage everyone to participate in the Wednesday evening suppers and worship. We'll resume our studies on Tuesday, January 10, 2017. For more information call Bob Kynast at 269-921-2786 or David Slater at 269-281-0848.

1st Sunday Book Discussion Group
December 4th, 6:30 in the upstairs lounge, is the time to come and be a part of our next book discussion. We will talk and share opinions about "Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter", by Kate Clifford Larson. This biography of Rosemary Kennedy, JFK's sister and the oldest Kennedy daughter, is a "valuable account of a mental health tragedy"(N.Y. Times Book Review). The glamorous, wealthy and powerful Kennedy family tried to hide the fact that Rosemary was intellectually disabled. The ramifications of this decision becomes Rosemary's legacy and eventually leads to the Kennedy family becoming instrumental in transforming the lives of millions, including the development of The Special Olympics.

We will take the month of January off and get back together again on February 12th (note; it's the second Sunday) to discuss "A Man Called Ove", by Fredrik Backman. Please join us. Questions? Call Kathy Cowall (269-428-0354) or kcowall@hotmail.com.

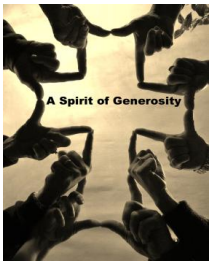
"One must be careful of books and what is inside them, for words have the power to change us". (Cassandra Clare, Infernal Devices)

Weds Bible Study
The Wednesday group will not be meeting in December. Join us again in January.

Thursday Bible Class
We will meet again in January when we will study the Apostle Paul. Watch for details!

Support

….with glad and generous hearts, praising God ….
Acts 2:46c



Thank you to everyone who has turned in your commitment sheet already. If you have not yet returned your commitment sheet we encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Thank you also to those who have increased your pledge. We thank God for the blessings He has given Saron and bow in gratitude for all who make Saron an active, giving and growing congregation. As we look ahead to the end of 2016 and on to 2017, may we continue our mission of serving God by serving others, by continuing to worship each Sunday and by generously sharing our time, talents and dollars.

God's Work. Our Hands.

A Special Message for Travelers and Those Who Prefer Electronic Giving

Saron offers the option to give electronically for your convenience. Please contact the church office if you have any questions or to enroll. Thanks.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with Scottrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, contact our representative, Bill Fuentas, at (574) 272-1980. The statements we receive from Scottrade do not identify who donated the stock so please notify Dave Bradley or Denise Cook when you have donated. This allows us to complete the transaction and to be sure it's added to your giving statement. If you have further questions or concerns contact Dave Bradley or Denise Cook.

Saron Preservation Fund

At the Church annual meeting in January, we approved a special addition to the budget to do exterior repairs around the old front entrance as part of a long term exterior maintenance project. We were fortunate that Pearson Construction was able to do the work in late spring, but we have not yet received all the pledges to the Building Fund / Preservation Fund needed to pay for it. Consequently, we had to pay the Pearson bill out of our dwindling cash reserve. If you have not yet made your Preservation Fund contribution yet, please make it as soon as possible so that we can reimburse the cash reserve. **Received thru 10/31: $5,513.00 Needed $9,500**

Hospitality

Sign Up for Refreshments

Please consider signing up for refreshments to be served after worship on Sundays. There is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex bulletin board.

PARKING

A few words about parking around Saron. As we look to the winter months, please take into consideration where you park. If you have the ability to walk some distance, please allow those who are less able to do that, to park nearer the doors, especially during inclement weather.

Outreach

Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen -

In the month of November, Saron's Soup Kitchen day falls on Thanksgiving. Several community organizations provide a traditional Thanksgiving meal - turkey, dressing, potatoes, and vegetables. Saron is providing pies, whipped topping and cranberry sauce. Special thanks to Kathie Bradley, Ruth Ball and Debbie Standen for baking pies!

ELCA GOOD GIFTS

Have you ever selected a gift for someone in need from a Christmas tree in a shopping mall or store? Now you can do the same thing at SARON! You will have the opportunity to support the ELCA GOOD GIFTS campaign by purchasing an ornament. In the narthex, a Christmas tree will be decorated with GOOD GIFTS ORNAMENTS, there will be a variety of ornaments to chose from, prices ranging from $10.00 - $500.00. The back of each ornament can be personalized.

Checks made out put on the memo line to: ELCA GOOD GIFTS. God's Blessings to all.

Meet Me At The Freezer -

Are you in need of a meal? Does a friend/neighbor need a meal? Freezer meals are available for you to take, to any one in need. The meals are located in the DINING ROOM FREEZER. The meals include an entrée, rolls and dessert. Visiting someone, and sharing with them, is a wonderful form of Outreach.

LWR Fair Trade

We support Lutheran World Relief Fair Trade farmers through our selling of coffee, tea, and cocoa at cost. We have flavored coffee, decaf, medium and dark roast coffees, black and green teas, and now we are offering Keurig cups. Please support this ministry by purchasing these products regularly for yourself and as gifts. Thank you.

Michigan Blood Drive -
Saron's next Blood Drive will be held near the end of February 2017 - mark your calendars.

Racism Awareness Workshop
On Saturday, November 20, Pastor Oleson and four Saron members (Darlene Kiessel, Liz Kunkel, Bob and Mary Kynast) travelled to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Lansing to attend a synod sponsored workshop on Racism Awareness and Racial Justice. What a day of learning! Approximately 50 of us from churches all around our synod were bombarded with thought provoking information about how racism is still active in our country. The keynote speaker was Judith Roberts from the ELCA office in Chicago. Her interactive presentation challenged all of us to examine our assumptions as we evaluated our own personal experiences with diversity and racism. C.J. Clark, Executive Director of Living Waters Ministries (the present day structure that has grown from Stony Lake Camp), told us about MYLA and Building Bridges, two leadership building and racial justice building camping programs they are doing. Middle School and High School campers from Michigan and six other states spend a week at Stony Lake exploring their faith and learning how to be leaders for racial justice. Last, we heard from Bev Dirken, a layperson from our synod, who made sure we heard about what our synod is doing to promote racial justice and equality for all. You will be hearing more from all of us, especially about how Saron might play a larger role in these efforts.

Women of the ELCA

Deborah Circle

Deborah Circle will not meet in December. January 11th 2017, is the date for the Christmas Party at the home of Karen Johnson.

SARON CHURCH WOMEN BAKE SALE
Saron Church Women will be having a bake sale in the church narthex on Sunday, December 4th. Proceeds will go to ELCA Good Gifts, the Berrien County Department of Health and Human Services Operation Good Cheer project (so six foster children can each receive three Christmas gifts), and the Saron Mentor Family Fund. Please bring a baked item or items and, hopefully, make a purchase. This would be a good time to make Christmas treats. We will continue to collect on the following Sunday, December 11. Thank you in advance for your support. It is very much appreciated. Contributions to the Mentor Family Fund are accepted throughout the year.

Update on Mentor Fund
For the past several years, Saron Church Women has sponsored bake sales and rummage sales with part or all of the proceeds going to the Mentor Fund. This fund has helped people with utility bills, medicine, rent, Christmas gifts, holiday dinners and many other needs. Now that the holiday season and winter are upon us, if you know of someone who is struggling and needs help, please call Pastor Oleson. This person does not need to be a member of Saron. A big thank you goes out to all of you who have supported Saron Church Women projects.

Facilities

GOLDEN HAMMERS NEED HELP!
Golden Hammers is a group of volunteers that meets every Wednesday from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. at the church. They are women and men that gather to do various jobs in and outside of the church that help keep Saron looking good and also saves the church a considerable amount of money. Work includes folding bulletins, preparing the monthly newsletter for mailing, preparing the sanctuary for Sunday service, minor maintenance and some light cleaning/vacuuming. We really need some additional helpers, both men and women. It is a good fellowship opportunity as well as helping to maintain God's house. Please consider helping and if you have any questions talk to Bill Oleson or Pastor Joan.

LAWN MOWERS
Thank you to everyone who helped with the mowing this season!

Council News

ENDOWMENT FUND
Contributions to the Endowment Fund can be made by cash, check, or securities in the same way as weekly offerings. You are also encouraged to remember the Endowment Fund in your estate planning. Earnings from the Endowment Fund have provided over $44,000 in support of Saron's mission. The Endowment Committee is always happy to answer your questions.

Saron's Council Members – 2016

Mary Alice Brunner (248-767-9026) – President
Matt Bradley (*419.306.5780)* – Vice President
Eric Standen (556-9629) – Treasurer
Mary Kynast (428-0148) – Secretary
Mary Kynast (428-0148) – Worship*
Jack Houser (556-0377) - Learning*
Eric Standen (556-9629) – Facilities*
Scott Gaspari (847-373-8825) – Youth*
Austin Kamala – (269-930-5989) – Youth*
Frieda Williams (556-7269) – Support*
Matt Bradley (*419.306.5780)* - Support*
Tyler Cook (*269-930-2810*)– Hospitality*
Judi Huff (473-5075) – Hospitality*
Jan Stevens (429-2044) – Outreach*
Joan Oleson (983-1273 office;
983-2475 home) – Pastor
**liaison*

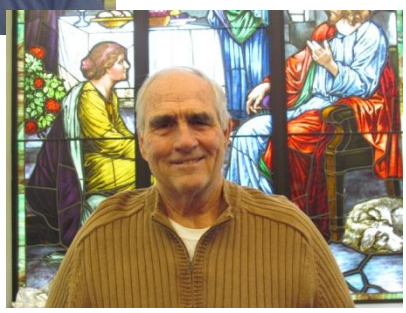
Attendance Record	
10/30/2016	*100*
11/06/2016	*124*
11/13/2016	*97*
11/20/2016	*98*

LOOKING AHEAD

Saron's annual meeting will be held Sunday, January 22nd, 2017 after the 2nd service. Mark your calendars!

Welcome, New Members

Beth Gray-Roll and Marcus Roll



Bill Swasey

Thank you to our stewardship speakers – Bob Deaton, Mia Bradley, and John Taylor

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

December 2016

We're on Facebook! Like us at
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
Saturday, December 24; 7:00 & 10:00 pm
Candlelight and Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP
Sunday, December 25; 9:30 am
Holy Communion

NOTE---One Service Only on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1

Saron
Volunteer Schedule

	December 4 ***Second Sunday of Advent***		***December 11*** ***Third Sunday of Advent***		***December 18*** ***Fourth Sunday of Advent***		***December 24*** ***Christmas Eve***	***December 25*** ***Christmas Day***
		11:00	**8:30**	**11:00**	**8:30**	**11:00**	***7:00 & 10:00***	***9:30***
Assisting minister	Pauline Ngonyani	Tyler Cook	Wendy King	Bill Oleson	Eric Standen	Colleen Lundgren		Wendy King
Reader/ Comm. Asst.	Jan Stevens	Laurel Gacek	Sue Rood	Youth	Sally Schmuhl	Dan Fortenbacher	Matt Bradley 7 Jim Oleson 10	Bob Kynast
Ushers	Eric & Deb Standen	Peter & Karen Johnson	Dave & Sue Bailey	Scott and Lindsay Gaspari	Keith Stevens & Fritz Knauf	Dave & Sue Bailey	Dave & Kathie Bradley 7:00 Jerry & Ruth Stelling 10:00	David and Emma young
Acolyte	Carter Hohman	Grant Gacek & Mia Bradley		Jenna & Brooke Henderson	Troy Burrow	Molly Becker	Mia Bradley 7:00	Austin Kamala
Nursery 1st	Darlene Kiessel	Mary Kynasts	Marilyn Frey	Marilyn Lucy	Karen Hinckley	Ruth Stelling		NO Nursery
Nursery 2nd		Danielle Hohman	Danielle Hohman	Danielle Hohman	Danielle Hohman	Danielle Hohman	Danielle Hohman	
Bldg. close		Ken Ark		Bruce & Linda Huff		Marilyn and Brad Frey	Colleen & Dennis Lundgren	
Snacks	Saron Church Women	Bake Sale	Jan Stevens	Jan Stevens	OPEN	Marilyn Lucy	OPEN	OPEN
Lawn mower								
Flowers	Dick & Marlene Schalon		OPEN		OPEN		Dennis & Colleen Lundgren	

December 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Weekly Holy Communion and Children's Sermon				1 6:00 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. Senior Choir Rehearsal	2	3 9:00 a.m. Men's Devotion/Breakfast Meet at the Galley Grill on Red Arrow Highway, Stevensville
4 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship 9:40 a.m. Sunday Church School Classes 6:30 p.m. 1st Sunday Book Discussion Group	5 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group	6	7 9:30 a.m. Golden Hammers 6:00 p.m. Advent Soup Supper 6:45 p.m. Worship	8 6:00 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. Senior Choir Rehearsal	9 6:00 p.m. Laurie Granger Memorial Service 4-6:00 p.m. Visitation	10
11 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Youth Christmas Program 9:40 a.m. Sunday Church School Classes	12 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group 9:00 a.m. Newsletter Articles Due	13	14 9:30 a.m. Golden Hammers 6:00 p.m. Advent Soup Supper 6:45 p.m. Worship	15 6:00 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. Senior Choir Rehearsal	16	17
18 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Cantata 9:40 a.m. Sunday Church School Classes	19 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group 7:00 p.m. Saron Church Council Meeting	20 3:30 p.m. Vasa Meeting	21 9:30 a.m. Golden Hammers 6:00 p.m. Advent Soup Supper 6:45 p.m. Worship	22 6:00 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. Senior Choir Rehearsal	23	24 **Christmas Eve** 7:00 & 10:00 p.m. Worship with Communion
25 **Christmas Day** 9:30 a.m. Worship with Communion NO Sunday Church School Classes	26 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group	27	28 9:30 a.m. Golden Hammers	29	30	31 **New Year's Eve**